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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, DC 20505

National Intelligence Council

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2 March 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED]  
National Intelligence Officer for  
Latin America

SUBJECT: Latin America Warning and Forecast Meeting  
February 1990

1. The Latin American Warning and Forecast Meeting took place on 27 February 1990. Intelligence Community representatives reached the following major conclusions:

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- In El Salvador - The guerrillas have largely regained their preoffensive combat strength and capabilities and have the capacity to prolong the war at current levels. Nicaraguan and Cuban support for the rebels appeared to continue at high maintenance levels in January and February. While Ortega's defeat will disrupt supplies and psychologically deflate the guerrillas, the Sandinistas may surge deliveries during their remaining 60 days in power and Cuba can probably find alternative mechanisms to maintain overall materiel flows.
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Approved for Release

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### 3. El Salvador

Intelligence Community analysts do not expect another major FMLN offensive in the next few months. The insurgents have made good their losses from the November 1989 offensive and appear to be receiving a steady stream of weapons and supplies from Nicaragua--seaborne arms deliveries have been very high in January and February. However, their urban infrastructure remains disrupted and the level of training of their new recruits is low. While there has been an increase in the pace of FMLN military actions--mining, low-level ambushes, attacks against economic targets--the overall focus over the next few months is likely to be on political and diplomatic initiatives to influence a decision in the US Congress on aid to El Salvador.

So for this year, there had been no evident decline in the commitment of the Cubans or Sandinistas to support the FMLN. The new situation in Nicaragua will complicate and disrupt the guerrillas' primary supply conduit, but may not lead to a dramatic downturn in overall guerrilla resupply. Cuba will make greater use of other routes to supply the insurgents and even after the new Nicaraguan government has taken power will be able to make some clandestine use of Nicaraguan territory--much as it has in Honduras and Guatemala. During the remaining two months in power, the Sandinistas may surge deliveries to provide the FMLN some greater stockpiles.

Prospects for a negotiated settlement have not dramatically changed with talks between the government and guerrillas making only slow progress. The Nicaraguan election may cause some elements within the FMLN to regard negotiations more seriously, but it is likely at the same

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time to strengthen the resolve of those in the FMLN who have supported a military solution to the conflict. This may make it more difficult for the FMLN to settle on a coherent policy toward talks with the government--raising the possibility of a split in FMLN ranks.

The government, meanwhile, appears to be continuing to seriously investigate the Jesuit murders case, but there is a good possibility that it could stretch on for months or even years. President Cristiani and the senior armed forces leadership are likely to continue to press for a resolution of the case, even if it leads to a conviction of Colonel Benavides--alleged to be the author of the killings. Their commitment would come into question, however, were a more senior member of the military high command or Roberto D'Aubuisson to be implicated. Analysts doubt, for example, that Cristiani would be willing to pursue a case against D'Aubuisson. An additional scenario fraught with difficulties would be the exoneration of Benavides but the conviction of the lieutenants involved in the murders. This would sharpen generational tensions in the armed forces and perhaps even provoke open protest or rebellion by junior officers.

## Warning Issue

The guerrillas have largely regained their pre-offensive combat strength and will have the capability to prolong the war at current levels. The Jesuit murders case is not likely to be resolved quickly, and its ambiguities will have considerable potential to undermine the international credibility of the Cristiani government and to foster increased internal political tensions.

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